

British Columbia News

## Province reinvesting in the Northwest with grants to regional districts, municipalities

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**Terrace** - Government is investing in success for northwest communities by addressing long-standing infrastructure needs that are holding back the region.

A \$100-million Northern Capital and Planning Grant will go to four regional districts (Fraser Fort George, Bulkley Nechako, Kitimat Stikine and North Coast) and their 22 municipalities.

“The rich resources and hard-working people of the Northwest have long contributed more than their fair share to the prosperity of our province,” said Premier John Horgan. “Unfortunately the benefits of success have been slow to flow back to the region, leaving communities with aging infrastructure that does not meet their needs or the needs of industry.”

“We’re reversing this legacy of neglect with a new Northern Capital and Planning Grant that will help people and communities make the most of new opportunities, so that the benefits of resource development are felt for years to come,” Premier Horgan said.

This grant fulfils Premier Horgan’s commitment to northwest mayors to make sure local workers and communities are able to reap the full benefits of resource development in their region.

“We’ve been hearing from local governments in northern B.C. about the challenges they face funding much-needed upgrades to their aging infrastructure, and how it makes it difficult for them to make the most of growth opportunities and holds them back from diversifying their economies,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “We know this grant will not only help northern communities meet their infrastructure needs today, but it will also set them up to benefit from development opportunities in the future.”

Small communities within the catchment area will receive a larger proportional share of the grant to compensate for their reduced commercial and industrial tax base.

Local governments may use the grant to meet an immediate infrastructure need for their community, save it for a future opportunity or leverage it to secure other sources of funding, including borrowing, reserves and other grant programs, to cover major infrastructure and long-term planning.

The grant was informed by recent discussions between the Province and the Northwest B.C. Resource Benefits Alliance. The Province consulted with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, as a change to the Local Governments Grant Regulation is required before the Northern Capital and Planning Grant can be implemented.

### Quotes:

#### **Carol Leclerc, mayor of Terrace –**

“This is the largest grant the City of Terrace has ever received, and it represents one-third of our annual budget. It gives us the chance to address some of the many outstanding projects we would like to tackle. We are grateful to the provincial government for recognizing the needs of northern communities.”

#### **Lee Brain, mayor of Prince Rupert –**

“Each community in the North has struggled for years to improve and maintain infrastructure, services and day-to-day operations that meet the desired liveability outcomes for local residents, small businesses and industries. The Province has listened to our concerns by providing this financial injection, as it will help all our communities begin to tackle those challenges as our region becomes a globally significant national trade corridor.”

**Joan Atkinson, mayor of Mackenzie –**

“The Northern Capital and Planning Grant provides invaluable assistance to help Mackenzie and other small northern B.C. communities meet our current infrastructure challenges and prepare for upcoming development opportunities.”

**Quick Facts:**

- The LNG Canada facility is expected bring an influx of new people into the region. The Northern Capital and Planning Grant will help local governments improve infrastructure and services for the new and existing population.
- The 22 municipalities will receive a total of \$83.7 million. The four regional districts will receive \$16.3 million.
- Local governments can generally expect to receive the following based on their populations and assessment bases:
  - municipalities with populations of more than 10,000 people will receive between \$6 million and \$9 million;
  - municipalities with populations of fewer than 10,000 people will receive between \$1 million and \$6 million; and
  - regional districts will receive between \$1 million and \$6 million.

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